DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 453 338 UD 034 213

AUTHOR	Jackson, Tony
TITLE	Equal Access to Education: A Peace Imperative for Burundi.
INSTITUTION	International Alert, London (England).
SPONS AGENCY	Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).
ISBN	ISBN-1-898702-06-4
PUB DATE	2000-06-00
NOTE	46p.; Report commissioned by the Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden.
AVAILABLE FROM	International Alert, 1 Glyn Street, London SE11 5HT, United Kingdom. Tel: 44-020-7793-8383; Fax: 44-020-7793-7975; e-mail: general@international-alert.org; Web site: http://www.international-alert.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Donors; Dropout Rate; Educational Finance; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Ethnic Bias; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Higher Education; Language of Instruction; *Politics of Education; Private Financial Support; Refugees; Sex Bias; Teacher Salaries; Teaching Conditions; War
IDENTIFIERS	*Burundi

ABSTRACT

This report examines the status of Burundi's formal education system, focusing on elementary and secondary schooling. It addresses the issues of access to education and quality of education as well as the role of the state and donors in funding the system. It explains how the protracted civil war in Burundi has paralyzed the education system, which was already failing before the conflict began. The report finds that the majority of children in Burundi receive no formal education; boys have a better chance than girls of going through both primary and secondary school. Educational achievement is further complicated by the fact that in grades 1-4, children are taught in their native Kirundi, but by grades 5 and 6, all instruction is in French. This report focuses on: "Burundi"; "The Effects of the Conflict"; "Primary Education" (access to primary education, dropout and repetition rates, the language of instruction, changing goals of primary education, curriculum and school management, and non-formal education); "Secondary Education" (access to secondary education, community colleges, and lycees and technical schools); "University Education"; "The Teachers"; "Access to Education" (unequal access, gender and education, education for Twa minority students, and education in refugee camps); "Paying for Education" (government contributions, parent contributions, cost-effectiveness, and international donors); "Infrastructure"; "Ministry Policies to Improve Education"; and "Conclusions and Recommendations." (Contains 27 bibliographic references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 453 338

Equal Access to Education
a peace imperative for Burundi

Tony Jackson

INTERNATIONAL ALERT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
T. Jackson
International Alert
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

UD034213

This report was commissioned by the **Nordic Africa Institute**, Sweden with funding from the **Swedish International Development Agency**, SIDA.

International Alert is a non-governmental organisation based in the UK, which aims to contribute to the prevention and resolution of violent internal conflict. It recognises that lasting peace can only be built on the basis of justice, and respect for human rights.

International Alert is currently working in the Great Lakes region of Africa, the Caucasus, West Africa and Sri Lanka, as well as carrying out policy and advocacy work on relevant issues.

Tony Jackson is Policy Adviser to the Great Lakes programme, International Alert.

International Alert
1 Glyn St
London SE11 5HT
UK
Tel: +44 (020) 7793 8383
Fax: +44 (020) 7793 7975
Email: general@international-alert.org
www.international-alert.org

© International Alert June 2000
ISBN 1-898702-06-4

Contents

PREFACE 2

INTRODUCTION 5

BURUNDI 7

THE EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICT 8

PRIMARY EDUCATION 11

- ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION 11
- DROP-OUT AND REPETITION RATES 11
- THE LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION 12
- THE CHANGING AIMS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION 14
- THE CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT 16
- NON-FORMAL EDUCATION 17

SECONDARY EDUCATION 18

- ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION 18
- COMMUNITY COLLEGES 18
- LYCÉES AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS 19

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION 21

THE TEACHERS 23

ACCESS TO EDUCATION 25

- UNEQUAL ACCESS 25
- GENDER AND EDUCATION 28
- EDUCATION FOR THE TWA 29
- EDUCATION IN REFUGEE CAMPS 30

PAYING FOR EDUCATION 32

- GOVERNMENT INPUT 32
- PARENTAL INPUT 32
- COST-EFFECTIVENESS 34
- INTERNATIONAL DONORS 35

INFRASTRUCTURE 36

MINISTRY POLICIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION 37

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 38

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 41

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 42

Preface

The following report reveals the desperate state of Burundi's Education system. It has been produced primarily to inform the international donor community. The purpose of this short preface is not to summarise the report but to analyse the relationship between education and conflict in Burundi in the past, and to argue the significance of education in the peace equation for the future.

Exclusion has been at the root of Burundi's cyclical conflicts since independence in the early 1960s. Exclusion begins with differential access to education. This is especially so in a society and economy in which state employment has been virtually the only alternative to peasant agriculture, and education is the only path to such advancement. Chronic distortions in access to education have been a major factor in ensuring that the minority Tutsi have predominated in the institutions of the state. This has been most evident in the army and the judiciary, but it has extended across the whole range of state employment, especially at senior levels.

The origins of exclusion lie in the colonial period when, for over half a century, the colonial power educated the Tutsi to form a local administrative caste. It was only tardily in the last years before independence that efforts were made to correct the imbalance in educational provision. However, having been shut out for so long, some Hutu in the past came to believe that the only way to change things was by violence and the killing of Tutsi. Such a belief, in its most extreme form, constitutes a threat of genocide. Fear that such extremism might become widespread continues today to fuel the resistance to change among some Tutsi. A Hutu uprising in 1972 was countered by widespread killing of educated Hutu, and for the next 20 years Tutsi predominance in the main institutions of the state continued.

The democratic elections of 1993 created expectations of placements and jobs for supporters of the winning Frodebu party, to which the new president had to respond. But many of the Hutu appointed to government jobs in the capital and in the provinces were ill-equipped educationally to cope with their responsibilities, and the Tutsi who lost those same jobs nurtured their sense of grievance. It was the killing of the president only a few months later by elements of the Tutsi-dominated army that ignited the latest phase of Burundi's conflict.

For the sake of brevity this simplified account has focused on the ethnic division. But ethnicity itself is not the cause of conflict in Burundi. Consciousness of ethnicity was fostered during the colonial time, and ethnicity has since been manipulated for political and self-interest purposes

by the élite. The point of the analysis is not to dwell on the ethnic question but rather to see that differences in access to education at all levels have been a major factor leading to exclusion, which in turn has driven those excluded to resort to violence. A 1999 report on poverty in Burundi produced jointly by UNDP and the Ministry for Planning states: "the non-access to education and training constitutes a factor of exclusion from information, and may be the principal source of other forms of exclusion".

If Burundi had not gone to war on ethnic lines, it might have done so on regional lines. There are massive disparities in the deployment of education resources to the different provinces of the country. In addition to the capital, the favoured provinces are Bururi and Makamba in the south and Gitega and Muramvya in the centre. Bubanza in the north-west is the most deprived of educational provision. Historically there is some substance in the claim that Bururi is poor in agricultural resources relative to other provinces, so its people became more conscious of the value of education as the route to employment. The same case is made to explain why Bururi has always provided the majority of recruits to the army. However, the preponderant share that Bururi has long held of education facilities coupled with its 'old boy' links to the university in Bujumbura, has given it a much resented predominance in the political, military and business establishment.

The political arrangements of Burundi's peace agreement and the power-sharing in the transitional government must balance regional as well as ethnic interests. But this is a momentary balancing act: the peace agreement cannot correct the underlying disequilibrium overnight. Changes in the composition of the army and particularly its officer corps, and the dilution of Tutsi predominance in the justice system, are ultimately dependent on more Hutu benefiting from the best education that the country can offer. For peace to become sustainable there has to be a progressive evening up of access to education at all levels for all ethnic groups and all parts of the country.

The way this is done is critically important. First of all it has to be started quickly. The transition is going to be an immensely difficult period with every danger that the peace agreement will break down in whole or in part. It is essential that at an early stage there be visible evidence of attention to fundamental grievances so that people are assured that long-term change is being started. More equitable access to education will be an important touch-stone in the aftermath of a peace agreement.

But it is also essential that long-term change which will benefit the interests of one group is not seen to threaten the interests of the other. It must be clear that Peter is not being robbed to pay Paul. In other words, there must

be no reduction in the quantity or quality of educational provision that is going to the provinces that are currently more favoured. That would provoke a backlash that could easily re-ignite the conflict. The education cake in Burundi cannot stay the same size and simply be cut into more equitable proportions. The cake has to be made larger with significant new resources being allocated to even up the proportions. The only possible source of these new resources is the international donor community.

Thirdly, there is the question of priorities. This report confirms that every aspect of education in Burundi is beset with weaknesses and deficiencies. This is not a case in which the old 'quantity versus quality' dichotomy can be allowed to arise. The peace imperative requires that both be addressed simultaneously and in full measure. The education infrastructure of buildings, books and equipment must be increased quickly. At the same time teacher training must be improved and increased.

The recent global summit on education (Dakar, April 2000) has confirmed the desperate needs of half the countries and peoples of the globe in respect of education. It is perhaps the greatest challenge the world faces at the outset of the twenty-first century. Education in Burundi is a tiny microcosm of that global need, but it is more than that: it is a uniquely special case because it will be the key to making Burundi's peace sustainable; other peace-related changes hinge upon it. It is the primary conflict prevention measure for the future.

The onus is on the international donor community, which has already contributed tens of millions of dollars to humanitarian relief and to efforts to bring Burundi's latest crisis of violent conflict to a peaceful end. Building equal opportunity in access to education will require a partnership led by the Education Ministry in the transitional government. The partnership will include local communities, the churches, UN agencies, and international donors. But it is only the donors who can provide the funding to make it possible for this partnership to work. Their support is essential to make education not only the peace dividend in which all Burundians can share, but also the functional means of making the peace last.

Bill Yates, Executive Secretary, Great Lakes programme

Introduction

This report describes in broad outline the current state of formal education in Burundi, with particular reference to primary and secondary schooling. The issues of access to education and the quality of that education are examined, as well as the role of the state and donors in funding the system. The report does not pretend to provide answers to what is a major challenge for the future of Burundi, but it raises some of the main issues now facing the country in this crucial sphere. It must be said at the outset that the education system in Burundi is in almost total crisis. This is a view shared by Burundian analysts, one of whom speaks of an education system confronted by "a generalised crisis".[1] It was admitted even by the Education Minister in 1997 who described the state of education as "catastrophic".[2]

The protracted civil war that has ravaged Burundi for the past seven years has virtually paralysed an education system that was already failing before the conflict began. The quantity and quality of teachers has suffered dramatically; thousands of pupils have been displaced, not to mention the psychological effect; and school buildings have been destroyed. Sustained peace in Burundi will require not only the repair and reform of the education system but also a major expansion of capacity. The need for resources is paramount, but as well as training, buildings, equipment and books, there needs to be a clearer definition of the aims and priorities for education.

Equal access to education for all ethnic groups from all provinces is an essential element for a peaceful future for the country as a whole. One of the main demands of the rebel groups, for instance, is to balance the regional and ethnic composition of the army. To enter the army, an ordinary recruit needs primary education, while those wishing to become officers need at least secondary education. Formal education is also needed to enter government service. If access to education remains unequal for Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, and if the glaring disparities in education provision between different provinces persist, the exclusion that is at the root of Burundi's conflict will remain and any peace agreement will be short-lived.

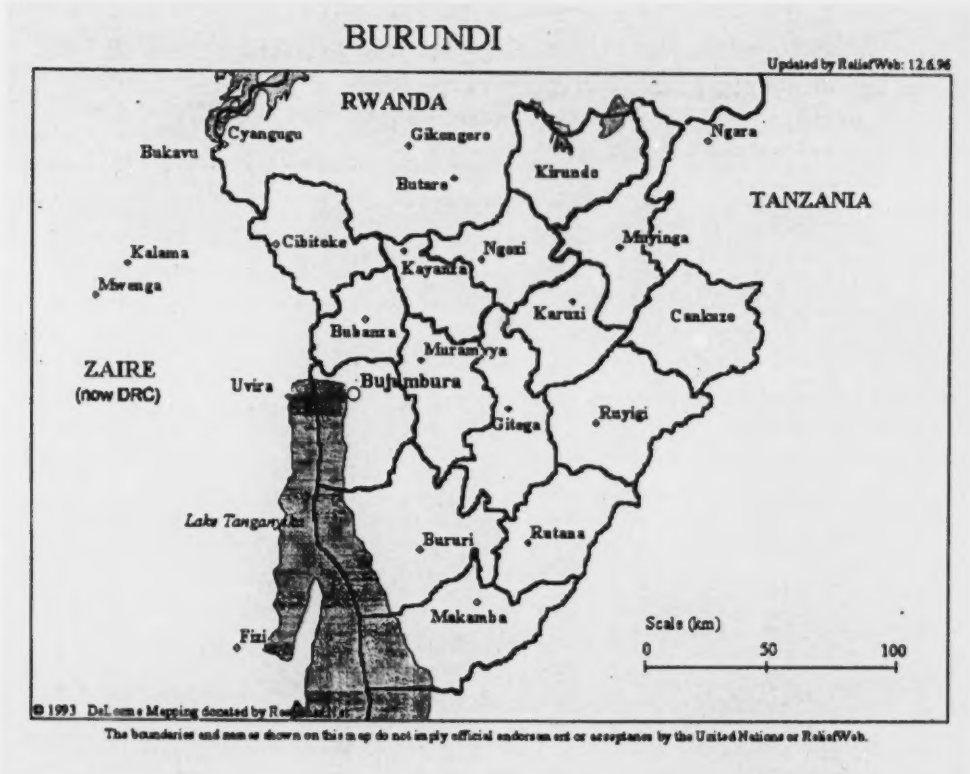
This report is grounded in five years of policy research and advocacy in the Great Lakes region, and informed specifically by seven weeks of research in Burundi in late 1999 and early 2000. I interviewed officials in the Ministry

[1] Adrien Ntambona , Editorial: Eduquer Autrement Aujourd'hui au Burundi, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997, pp197 and 199. Abbe Ntambona is a Professor at the University of Burundi and director of the magazine.

[2] Quoted in Conflict in the Great Lakes: towards peace through education, Christian Aid, 1999, p8

of Education and travelled through the provinces of Ngozi, Cibitoke and Bujumbura Rurale to visit schools and talk with teachers. I also visited schools in Bujumbura city and spoke with students and teachers at the national university as well as at the newly opened University of Ngozi. During these visits I was accompanied by Ministry of Education officials. On one trip I was accompanied by the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Education. I also spoke extensively with officials from international agencies working in education and with a range of education specialists. I collected a large number of reports and articles on education in Burundi, many of which are referenced in the bibliography. I have tried to incorporate the main findings of these documents in the report. What follows are not, then, simply the findings of a limited piece of research, but a reflection too of what many official papers and Burundian educationalists have been saying over the past years.

Burundi



Burundi is one of the poorest and most densely populated countries on earth. In 1992, a UNICEF paper noted that almost half of its 6 million population was under 15 years old and 80% were living below UN poverty levels[3]. Adult literacy levels are estimated at 36%[4]. The background to the education crisis is therefore one of unremitting poverty and low formal educational levels for the majority, exacerbated by seven years of violence and warfare. With such a poor population, the Government has a very low tax base with which to fund its programmes, including education. In addition, given the extremely high birth rate, there is a rapidly increasing number of young people to educate.

[3] Femmes et Enfants du Burundi, UNICEF, Burundi 1992, quoted in Adrien Ntambona, Une Etude Interpellante a Garder a l'Esprit, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997, pp437-8.
[4] Bilan de l'Education pour Tous a l'An 2000, Rapport Preliminaire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Burundi, August 1999, p59

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The effects of the conflict

The crisis of 1993 and the long drawn-out conflict that has followed have had a devastating effect on education in Burundi, and have greatly exacerbated the underlying problems that existed before that date. There are at least six major problems stemming from the conflict:

1. Major movements of population that have continued from 1993 until the present have had a negative impact on school attendance and on conditions for effective study. From 1994-97, depending on the year, there were between 100,000 and 200,000 less children in primary school than in 1993.[5] Children were either forced to drop out or were unable to begin school. Many others fled abroad with their families. Today an estimated 800,000 Burundians are still displaced within the country, comprising about 12% of the population.[6] 77,000 of the internally displaced are school-children, accounting for about one in eight of the school population.[7] In one school in Bujumbura City, the head told me that many of her pupils came "from all four corners of Burundi". These children are living in temporary homes in difficult conditions which are not conducive to concentrating on school work. The interruption caused to the education of these children by population movements and displacement is severe.

2. The conflict has also had a devastating effect on teachers. Many were killed - one report puts the number at 500[8] - while thousands of others became refugees. A high proportion of Burundi's trained teachers used to come from neighbouring countries, especially Zaire and Rwanda: in 1992, 22% of all primary teachers were foreigners. Post-'93 large numbers of these teachers returned to their own countries, some due to the insecurity, others after the RPF victory in Rwanda. The result was a catastrophic loss of trained teachers: by 1997, the number of foreign primary teachers had fallen to just 4%, a loss of 1,800 teachers.[9] The Ministry of Education has been forced to replace them usually with unqualified local teachers.

---

[5] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p5

[6] IRIN-CEA Update 856, 9/2/00

[7] Principaux Resultat de l'Inventaire des Infrastructures Physiques, Hydrauliques et Sanitaires des Ecoles Publiques du Burundi Pierre Claver Sinzinkayo, Ministry of Education, July 1998, p22. These figures may be too low: another report gives the number of displaced children in schools as 125,000 for the same year, a fifth of all those in school. (Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, p82)

[8] Oscar Bazikamwe, La Planification de l'Education, Table Ronde sur le Systeme Educatif Burundais, Dec98, p5

[9] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, study commissioned by the Great Lakes Advocacy Network, July 1998, p28

Another adverse effect of the conflict has been to drive teachers away from rural areas, which are regarded as insecure, to provincial capitals and Bujumbura City. Almost 500 teachers asked for transfers in early 1994 alone[10]. Thus, although in theory there are enough primary teachers to meet the overall needs (though many are unqualified), those teachers are not where they are needed. Bujumbura City has almost three primary teachers per classroom,[11] while in many rural areas there is a serious shortage of teachers. In the primary school in Bujumbura mentioned above, 16 out of 35 teachers were displaced from other areas.

3. At least 391 primary schools were destroyed as a result of the conflict - more than 25% of the total number.[12] Other schools were damaged while in use as temporary shelters for the displaced. Many are still being used for housing for the displaced. Furniture and text-books have also been destroyed. Burning and looting of schools was used as a rebel tactic as late as January 2000.[13]

4. International donors drastically cut aid to education after the coup of 1996. This is one reason for the chronic lack of textbooks in secondary schools. But income from fees paid by parents was also drastically reduced after the crisis. In 1992-3, primary school fees raised 88 million Burundian francs, but in the following three years fees averaged only 47 million francs. In 1997-8, 83 million francs were raised, but with the severe inflation since 1993, the buying power of this money has been significantly reduced.[14]

5. The psychological effects of the conflict on children are considerable, with many manifesting clinical symptoms of trauma. In one school I visited, 243 pupils (25% of the total) had lost at least one parent. In the country as a whole, the number of single parent families doubled after the crisis.[15] Many children have lost other close relatives too. In a survey of 2,770 children carried out by UNICEF, over 2,500 reported witnessing acts of violence.[16] 93% showed signs of troubled behaviour.[17] These children came from three of the most troubled

---

[10] Ibid, p88
[11] Bilan de l'Education pour Tous a l'An 2000, Rapport Preliminaire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Burundi, August 1999, p51
[12] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, July 1998; p85. This is the figure up to Feb96 only.
[13] Neglecting Justice in Making Peace, Burundi Briefing Paper, Human Rights Watch, Mar23, 2000, p4
[14] Interview with Ministry official, 26/11/99.
[15] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, July 1998; p81, where the increase is given as 7.6% before 1993 and 16.8% by '95, without more details of the figures.
[16] Le phenomeme des traumatismes vecus par les enfants lors de la crise d'Octobre 1993, UNICEF, Bujumbura, Jan95, p8.
[17] Ibid, p10

provinces - Gitega, Muyinga and Ruyigi - but the results nonetheless reveal that the challenges for education in Burundi are not just at the level of inputs into the system; they also concern the special needs of the children themselves.

6. There is a further issue, mentioned in Ministry papers and elsewhere, namely the 'Balkanisation' of schools, especially secondary schools. "The socio-political crisis which has affected Burundi since 1993 has created the phenomenon of ethnic Balkanisation in the majority of secondary schools" says the Ministry's latest policy paper, noting that pupils tended to go to schools where they felt secure.[18]

The effects of the conflict on teachers, pupils and school infrastructure have been extremely severe. However, many of the educational problems described in this report existed before the crisis: lack of access, the geographical spread of services, the quality of teaching, the language issue and financing were all problematic before 1993. The conflict has undoubtedly made the situation much worse and has caused additional problems. Nevertheless, the challenge that faces Burundi and the international donor community today is not only to repair and reconstruct a damaged education system, but to correct the distortions in access and to resolve the failings of the system that existed before 1993.

[18] Politique Sectorielle, Ministry of Education, Mar99, p14

Primary Education

Access to primary education

There are 1,467 primary schools in Burundi.[19] In terms of the number of teachers and of resources, primary education is by far the main plank in the Burundian education system. But how many children attend primary school? It is estimated that there are 1.1 million children of primary school age (7-12 years).[20] Ministry of Education figures for 1998-9 show that only 37% of these children were in school.[21] In other words, two-thirds of Burundi's primary age children - about 660,000 - did not attend school last year. This is in part the consequence of the massive disruption and displacement caused by the protracted conflict. However, even in the last 'normal' year, 1992-3, only 52% of primary age children were at school, leaving almost half a million outside the formal system.[22]

Drop-out and repetition rates

Ministry figures show a drop-out rate in primary schools of 8%.[23] Much more alarming are the numbers of pupils who have to repeat academic years to qualify for the next class. From years 1-4, there is a steady average of 28% who fail their exams and consequently have to repeat the year. For pupils in year 5 this figure shoots up to 37%, while for year 6, 44% have to repeat the year.[24] Reasons for the high rate of class repetition will be discussed later; suffice it to note here that this represents an enormous wastage of pupil-years and therefore of educational resources.[25]

There are two additional effects of having to cater twice or more for thousands of pupils: it prevents others from getting a place in school, and it means that the age of pupils is often greatly at odds with the level of teaching given. Many primary school pupils are well into their teens. In the

---

[19] Statistiques Scolaires, Annee Scolaire 1998-99, Ministry of Education, Feb 99, p2

[20] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique, Cas du Burundi, Ministry of Education, Burundi, Apr 99, p16. There has been no census in Burundi since 1990. Thus, population figures are estimates which give an order of magnitude but are not by any means accurate. Education statistics too are questionable, with a gap in reliable figures from 1993 to at least 1997, when UNICEF gave technical assistance to improve data collection.

[21] Ibid, p46. Although according to Ministry statistics, in 1998-9, there were 668,000 children in primary school (60% of the 1.1 million figure above), many of these children are over-age: some start school late and in the final year of primary over 40% are retaking the year. Thus the percentage of children *of primary age* (called "net" percentage) in school is actually much less than the 60% figure usually quoted by the Ministry.

[22] Ibid, p46

[23] Ibid, p57

[24] Ibid, p54

[25] Ibid, pp54&57 where the Ministry of Education acknowledges this wastage.

early 1990s, a third of all children in year 6 of primary school were aged between 16 and 20, when the normal age should be 12.[26] As one Burundian educationalist writes: "This distorts teaching and education as a whole, since one has to teach young people of marriageable age with methods for teaching children".[27] The situation in secondary schools is similarly anachronistic. The average age of secondary pupils is over three years above the official age for the class, with the oldest pupil in year 7 (normally started at age 13) aged 24 and the oldest in year 10 (normally started at 16) aged 29![28]

The language of education

From the time when formal schooling was first established in Burundi the language of education was French. This changed in 1973 with the introduction of a new educational philosophy, 'Kirundisation'. It proposed that all teaching in primary school should be in Kirundi, with French taught as a foreign language. This principle holds today, but only for the first four years of primary school. In years 5 and 6, all lessons, except Kirundi classes, are taught in French.

A number of teachers were questioned about their pupils' understanding of French during those last two years of primary school. Without exception they stated that children understand only a "little", or "very little". In Kayanza, one teacher reported that children could not understand maths in French nor express themselves adequately in the language. This was echoed in a school in Ngozi where teachers said those pupils in years 5 and 6 did not understand French so they were often forced to correct them in Kirundi. In Cibitoke I was told that "children in year 6 can't speak French here. They jabber!" Even in Bujumbura City, where French is more commonly spoken, a highly experienced teacher expressed similar views. A 1989 evaluation of primary pupils' ability to write in French found that only "15% of pupils are able to write a message that is correct and coherent in French".[29] By all accounts there has been little or no improvement since then.

The teachers' statements are borne out by the huge numbers of pupils repeating years 5 and 6. As already noted, while the average re-take rate for years 1-4 is a steady 28%, it leaps to over 40% in year 6. The Ministry of Education acknowledges the problem, saying it "can be explained by the

---

[26] Adrien Ntambona, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997, p438.
[27] Ibid, p438. All translations, this included, are mine.
[28] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p26-7
[29] Quoted in Daniel Bitagoye, Historique et Finalites du Systeme Educatif Burundais, 1998, p7

use of French as the language of teaching in years 5 and 6".[30] An additional problem is that the teachers themselves may not speak good French. A recent UNICEF report points to the lack of command of spoken French on the part of most teachers.[31]

Despite the above, some parents have long expressed their disquiet with Kirundisation, since they regard French as a passport to their children's future. A recent Ministry paper refers to the resistance of parents, especially 'the élite' to Kirundisation.[32] Since all government jobs down to commune level require French, and as getting a job in the civil service is the aspiration of many parents for their children, it is not surprising that there is a preference for French. The problem is that it leaves most of the school population, for whom no such jobs are available, forced to study in a language they do not properly understand. The vast majority of children lose out in the process.

There is a general consensus amongst Burundian educationalists and teachers that the current use of French as the language of teaching in the last two years of primary school prevents many children understanding the content of the curriculum.[33] Secondary school teachers made the related point that students entering year 7, the first year of secondary school, have a similar problem. One said the standard of French of students entering his lycée was "deplorable" (and that even after leaving secondary school it was not very good). Similar comments were made by head teachers in lycées and communal colleges in various areas of the country. So there would appear to be a serious knock-on effect from primary to secondary schools as far as understanding the curriculum is concerned. It is no exaggeration to say that there is a major learning gap from years 5-7 for a large number of pupils: they understand little and therefore learn little during those three years, with serious consequences for their remaining education.[34]

---

[30] Bilan de l'Education pour Tous a l'An 2000, Rapport Preliminaire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Burundi, August 1999, p54. Some pupils also stay on hoping to get higher grades next time around to enable them to get to secondary school.

[31] D. Bitagoye, Document de Reference sur l'Enseignement Primaire au Burundi, UNICEF, July 1999, p20

[32] Politique Sectorielle, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, March 1999, p9

[33] I found only one educationalist who disagreed; he felt the lack of French understood by children was over-stated. He may be right, hence the recommendation later that this matter be properly evaluated. However, I was struck during my latest visit to Burundi (March 2000) how little French is spoken even in Bujumbura, outside the commercial and civil servant groups. I telephoned various people's houses and on a number of occasions was unable to make myself understood - those who answered (children or house-workers) did not speak French.

[34] Although in this short report there is no place for more discussion on language and culture, some points merit a mention. Unlike in other African countries, there is no linguistic problem due to a multitude of languages in Burundi. Kirundi is spoken by all Burundians, while the closely-related language Kinyarwanda has millions of speakers in Rwanda. Perhaps 15 million speak either Kirundi or Kinyarwanda, including people in Kivu, parts of Uganda and Western Tanzania (one Ministry official even assured me that there is a town near Durban in South Africa called Ulundi where they speak Kirundi!). This is a rich base on which to build a language strategy. Kirundi is the medium of expression of the people and the nation; its soul and memory. Yet it is a wasted resource at present. For a powerful analysis of the

Given the above findings, it is encouraging that the Education Ministry's latest policy document, adopted by the Council of Ministers, has made the use of Kirundi in all six years of primary teaching a key objective for the future.[35] The Ministry's own publishing facility is well respected and produces materials in Kirundi as well as in French. However, it remains to be seen whether the resources will be made available for it to produce the new textbooks in Kirundi that will be needed for years 5 and 6.

The status of Kirundi is not helped by those institutions which might be expected to promote it as the national language. As far back as 1959 there existed a 'Kirundi language and literature study committee' which, upon independence in 1962, became the 'Academy for the Kirundi Language and Literature'.[36] Unfortunately this academy has never functioned[37]. At the National University there is a 'Centre for Language Teaching in Burundi' (CELAB) but this does not work in Kirundi![38] Given the central importance of Kirundi for everyday life and Burundian culture as a whole, let alone for education, the lack of a Kirundi language institute is a serious omission that should be rectified as soon as possible.[39]

The changing aims of primary education

Introduced at the same time, as 'Kirundisation' in 1973 was another new element in primary school teaching, referred to as 'ruralisation'. If the aim of the former was to redynamise Burundian culture, the aim of 'ruralisation' was to make education more relevant for children, specifically to prepare

---

role of language in education, with particular reference to Africa, see "Education for All: In Whose Language?", Birgit Brock-Utne, Sept 99. Dr Brock-Utne notes: "If the African child's major learning problem is linguistic…then all the attention of African policy-makers and aid from western donors should be devoted to strengthening the African languages as languages of instruction, especially in basic education. The concept 'education for all' becomes a completely empty concept if the linguistic environment of the basic learners is not taken into account" (p8). An example of confused thinking and misunderstanding about the role of language in learning is to be found in a 1998 project proposal by an international NGO which, justifying why it is producing a teaching guide to combat AIDS in Kirundi, states: "The guide has been written in Kirundi, the local language, for the purpose of adjusting to the low educational level of the participants". The reason surely is that people speak and understand Kirundi, which therefore is the best medium to publish in. A stimulating paper on the language question in Burundi can be found in Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997: "Les Langues Nationales et la Construction de l'Etat: l'example du Burundi", Philippe Ntahombaye.

[35] Politique Sectorielle, Ministere de l'Education Nationale , March 1999, p9

[36] P Ntahombaye, Les langues nationales et la construction de l'etat: l'example du Burundi, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997, p377-8.

[37] Ibid, p378

[38] CELAB is the Centre pour l'enseignement des langues au Burundi but focuses primarily on French teaching. It is supported by the French Foreign Ministry.

[39] From 1971-76, I myself helped establish a language institute in Guatemala (Proyecto Linguistico Francisco Marroquin - PLFM). The challenge was immense: over 20 largely unwritten Mayan languages, no fixed alphabets and an Education Ministry wedded to ignoring these 'dialects' in favour of Spanish. Today the PLFM, run by Guatemalans, is a recognised national institution, producing materials in many Mayan languages, including bilingual dictionaries, grammars and reading materials and employing trained Mayan linguists.

them more effectively for the rural society in which the vast majority would spend their lives. Thus while Kirundi was to become the language of teaching in primary school, children would be taught practical skills such as home economics and basic agricultural techniques.

By the early 1980s, universal primary education (UPE) was the priority aim. In 1982 in order to increase the number of children in primary school, and with the objective of achieving UPE by 1987,[40] the Ministry introduced a new measure: the double-shift system. Up to that time primary school teachers taught one class per day. Under the new system, teachers taught one class in the morning and another in the afternoon. In this way more children could attend school without needing to increase either the number of teachers or of classrooms. In terms of school attendance, this measure had an impressive effect: in the ten years from 1981 to 1991, enrolment figures shot up from 29% to 73%, with 460,000 more children in school.[41]

If the double-shift system was a resounding success statistically, in terms of the quality of primary teaching it had the opposite effect. Teaching time per pupil was cut from an average of 26 hours a week to less than 20; a reduction of 20%.[42] Considerably less time was allocated to all subjects apart from maths and French and hardest hit were the practical skills introduced under 'ruralisation'.[43] The practice of reviewing the morning's lessons in the afternoon with your teacher, as recalled in a discussion with a Burundian MP, was no longer possible. In addition, the double-shift system imposed an extra burden on teachers, whose workload increased substantially, leaving them little time for class preparation or correcting homework. Because of teacher fatigue, as well as the heat and the disruptive noise of heavy rain, afternoon classes are recognised as being less efficient. Therefore children are taught alternately one week in the morning and one in the afternoon. Some primary schools now teach two classes in one extended shift to avoid the strains of the double-shift system. I visited three classes with over 100 children in each: it is hard to believe that much can be learnt with such huge numbers to teach. The general opinion on the double shift system is that it fails the children as far as learning is concerned. One Ministry official put it succinctly: "It solved a political problem, that's all."

Under the double-shift system the objective of ruralisation became impossible to achieve: there was simply not enough time to take children out to the fields or to teach home economics. That aim has now been

---

[40] Bilan de l'Education pour Tous a l'An 2000, Rapport Preliminaire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Burundi, August 1999, p13

[41] Ibid, p14

[42] D. Bitagoye, Document de Reference sur l'Enseignement Primaire au Burundi, UNICEF, July 1999, p9

[43] Ibid, p9

quietly dropped, "sacrificed to the double-shift system", as a UNICEF report puts it.[44]

Today the two main official aims of primary education are to achieve universal primary education and to get more children into secondary school. The original target was to achieve UPE by 1987; this slipped to 2000, and is now planned for 2010. It is unclear how sufficient trained teachers, classrooms and materials will be provided to achieve this target. As to preparing children for secondary education, as will be explained later, only a small proportion of children can actually go to secondary school, since there are not enough places. The result is that most children leave primary school with no grounding or preparation for the sort of life they can realistically aspire to afterwards. One report comments that primary schools simply train "the unemployed masses".[45] When I asked teachers what children knew on leaving primary school, they smiled wanly or shook their heads.

The curriculum and school management

While teaching hours in primary school have been cut, additional subjects have been introduced. In 1989 French as a foreign language was reintroduced in year 1. More recently peace education and HIV/AIDS teaching have both been added to the curriculum, while the Ministry also plans that English as a foreign language will soon be taught in the final two years of primary school. Yet already, as a number of educationalists commented, the curriculum in years 5 and 6 is very full, so it is difficult to see how more subjects can be taught without *increasing* the number of teaching hours. It is also noteworthy that the core curriculum pre-1982 has not been reduced despite the cut in teaching hours: pupils have to learn as much as before in order to pass exams (and more with the above new subjects) despite having less teaching time. Furthermore, the curriculum was originally designed to be taught in a six-day week, but a five-day week was introduced in 1993. Not surprisingly many parents complain about the excessive workload imposed on their children.[46]

Although there are 1,467 primary schools in Burundi, there are only 722 head-teachers.[47] Many schools have satellite schools attached to them; some have three or four. Often the satellite schools are miles away from the main school, making supervision and control difficult, especially as most head teachers have no means of transport. One Ministry official mentioned

---

[44] Ibid, p11
[45] A Ntambona, L'education aux Valeurs a l'Ecole au Burundi, Au Coeur de l'Afrique,1/1999, p31
[46] D Bitagoye, Document de Reference sur l'Enseignement Primaire au Burundi, UNICEF, July 1999, p21
[47] Ibid, p12, (for 1997-8)

that statistics from satellite schools were likely to be of dubious quality since they could not be properly verified.

Non-formal education

Given the problems confronting formal education, particularly the fact that the majority of children do not attend school, various efforts have been made over many years to provide literacy training to those outside the system. Today over 276,000 pupils are enrolled in such classes, usually run by religious groups.[48] By far the largest such programme, with 222,000 pupils, is run by the Catholic Church, via Caritas, through its programme called 'Yaga Mukama' ('Speak, Lord').[49] Basic education as well as some religious teaching is provided, all in Kirundi, for an average of two days a week. Most of the teachers (87%) are unqualified and lack teaching materials.[50] Two evaluations, one undertaken in 1980 and the other in 1996, both found that a pupil in Yaga Mukama year 6 had attained the educational standard of a pupil in year 3 of formal primary school.[51] This level is extremely basic. The evaluations recommend changes to make the informal system more effective, and it would be useful to see them put into practice. However, even if improved, this type of non-formal education cannot be regarded as a substitute for formal primary education.

---

[48] Bilan de l'Education pour Tous a l'An 2000, Rapport Preliminaire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Burundi, August 1999, p61

[49] Ibid, p61

[50] Professeur Jacques Niyongabo, Evaluation des Centres d'Education de Base "Yaga Mukama", Rapport definitif, UNICEF and Government of Burundi, Dec 96. Pp89-90

[51] Ibid, p90

Secondary education

Access to secondary education

The exclusion from Burundi's education system that is apparent at the primary level increases exponentially as children get older. Ministry of Education statistics for 1998-99 show that 67,000 children are in secondary schools, which represents less than 9% of the 13-19 age-group.[52] In fact, this reflects a marked improvement in recent years. Up to the mid-'90s there was a major bottle-neck preventing pupils entering secondary school: so few places were available that at most only 10% of those finishing primary school were able to proceed to secondary education. Secondary schools, known as 'lycées', were of good quality but high cost, having a large number of boarders. The Burundian government lacked the resources to construct and maintain 'lycées' on the necessary scale.

A major effort to provide more secondary schools was begun in 1989, with the creation of 'community colleges'. These are built with parent and community participation and often with donor assistance. Unlike the 'lycées', they cater to day-pupils only. The Ministry pays the teachers' salaries but does not pay for most other inputs. On paper it looks an ideal way for an impoverished government to increase access to education at moderate cost to itself; and in terms of numbers, progress has been impressive. There were 12 secondary schools upon independence in 1962, only 169 in 1993, but by 1998 there were 329 schools, of which 212 were the new community colleges.[53] The number of children in secondary education also increased substantially, doubling in the ten years to 1999 so that now approximately a quarter of those finishing primary school go on to secondary education.

Community colleges

The improved statistics for access to secondary education hide a multitude of problems. Pressure to increase student numbers has led to what one Ministry adviser calls "the disorganised proliferation of community colleges", which have sprung up without reference to the need for qualified teachers or educational materials.[54] The Ministry is expecting community college

[52] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p24-28.
[53] Ibid, p23
[54] Historique et Finalites du Systeme Educatif Burundais, Daniel Bitagoye, paper delivered at the Round Table on the Education System, Jan 98, p6

attendance to double from 35,000 in 1998 to 70,000 this year.[55] As more colleges are opened, more unqualified teachers have to be employed to work in them. Thus the proportion of unqualified teachers is increasing: in 1995-6, 47% of community college teachers were unqualified, whereas by 1997-8, the figure had risen to 67%.[56]

A Ministry report expresses alarm at this prospect, stating: "...an unqualified teacher cannot give quality teaching as he (sic) does not have the ability. In the case of community colleges, the breadth of the problem is very worrying insofar as teaching of very bad quality produces young people who are badly schooled and badly trained...".[57] In its latest policy paper, the Ministry acknowledges "numerous deficiencies" regarding community colleges, among them: "lack of sufficient personnel, both in numbers and quality", and "lack of adequate buildings, lack of teaching material and equipment".[58]

Ministry figures estimate that there is one book for every four students in community colleges.[59] Scientific books and laboratory equipment are in even shorter supply. In a school in Ngozi, I saw a small cardboard box which contained its entire chemistry equipment. A visit to Cibitoke highlighted just how serious the lack of materials is. A hitch-hiker asked us for a lift; he turned out to be the head teacher of a community college and had been waiting at the roadside for a lift for over three hours. He explained that he needed to go to a school in the neighbouring commune to type up some notices for his teachers since his own school had no typewriter. He hoped his return journey would not take so long.

Lycées and technical schools

In the more established lycées, there are usually more materials available and teachers are better trained. Many such schools are run under contract to the Education Ministry by religious groups, especially the Catholic Church. A general concern about all secondary education, however, concerns the type of education given: it focuses heavily on academic rather than technical or vocational training. Pupils are prepared to continue to the next hypothetical stage of education, university, rather than prepared to take a job upon leaving. For those able to continue their education this is

[55] Situation des Colleges Communaux, Ministere de l'Enseignement Secondaire, Superieur et de la Recherche Scientifique, May 1998, p85. This Ministry fused with that in charge of primary education to form the Ministry of Education later in 1998.
[56] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, p61
[57] Situation des Colleges Communaux, Ministere de l'Enseignement Secondaire, Superieur et de la Recherche Scientifique, May 1998, p86.
[58] Politique Sectorielle, Ministry of Education, March 1999, p14
[59] Situation des Colleges Communaux, Ministere de l'Enseignement Secondaire, Superieur et de la Recherche Scientifique, May 1998, p153.

fine, but the vast majority of Burundians are not able to go to university. For many of them, receiving a more technical education would be a valuable alternative.

There are 23 technical schools with 4,800 pupils, representing just 8% of the total secondary intake.[60] These schools teach practical subjects such as masonry, plumbing, mechanics and dress-making. As in other schools, there is often a lack of equipment and much of what exists is out-dated. One report notes that for these reasons "teaching received is often more theoretical than practical".[61] Nevertheless, technical schools have a good record of enabling their students to find employment: 8 out of 10 students have jobs within two years of leaving.[62]

Ironically while there is a clear demand for technically trained people, this is a relatively neglected part of the education system. There is agreement among educationalists that technical schools need much more input and attention from the Ministry. The capacity should be expanded and teacher training improved so as to increase the throughput of pupils.

[60] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, July 1998; p50
[61] Ibid, p71
[62] Burundi: Analyse Globale du Systeme Educatif, Tome II, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, Government of Burundi, Dec 97, pXX

University education

Burundi has fewer university students per head of population than any other African country.[63] Until 1999 there was only one university, the University of Burundi, based in Bujumbura and run by the state. In 1998-9 it had 5,900 students. The new University of Ngozi in the North was opened in October 1999. This is a private university with fee-paying students, currently numbering 434,[64] but with plans to expand substantially in due course.

Even in the early 1990s, before the onset of the current conflict, the proportions of students from the two main ethnic groups at the national university in Bujumbura did not reflect the composition of the population as a whole. In 1995 an outbreak of killings at the university caused most Hutu students to flee. Although some have since returned, they still form a disproportionate minority of the student population. No statistics are available, but anecdotal evidence from a number of sources indicates that the national university is a largely Tutsi institution, with a small number of Hutus and only one Twa currently studying there. Hutu are likewise in a minority among the academic staff.

There is also a serious imbalance in the numbers at the university from different provinces and regions of the country. Links with Bururi province are reported to be particularly strong: a single commune in Bururi, Mugamba, provides about 15% of the entire student body, according to a senior Government source.[65] The case was described of a group of 23 Tutsis and one Hutu who recently graduated. Thirteen of the group came from Bururi, and all of these are today in good jobs, many with the national TV and radio stations or in commercial enterprises in Bujumbura run by people from Bururi. Most of the non-Bururi group are teachers, a job with a much lower salary. Another interviewee described how in the early '90s, the Minister of Education, who was from Bururi, decided to assign all the best university entrants to study literature; meanwhile those from Bururi, whose marks were lower, were assigned to study law or economics - the two subjects that lead to the best public and private sector jobs in Burundi.

Nowadays it is no longer the prerogative of the Minister to allocate places, so that loophole has been closed. Nevertheless, there is a clear feeling among many Burundians that the Bururi connection, and its extension over time to Bujumbura city through family links, is a valuable one for getting a

[63] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p40

[64] March 2000 figures. 50 are Rwandans and 4 Congolese.

good education and employment upon graduation. The establishment of the new university in Ngozi is in part a reaction to frustrations felt by people from other parts of the country that they do not have equal access to the national university. These distortions exemplify the phenomenon of 'exclusion'. Access to the national university is the apex of a problem that originates with the disparities in access to, and the quality of, education at the primary level.

[65] Interviewed in Bujumbura, 20/3/2000

The teachers

The performance of teachers is obviously crucial for the quality of education, and teacher morale and motivation are therefore significant. The status of teachers in Burundi has fallen sharply over recent years. Particularly affected is the largest group, primary teachers, who work the longest hours and receive the lowest pay. Many primary teachers earn less than 20,000 Burundian francs per month - equivalent to US$33 at the official exchange rate, but only $18 at the unofficial rate. A teacher with 12 years primary experience reported earning 36,000 francs ($60 official rate, $32 unofficial). Given the high level of inflation in Burundi over the last few years, the buying power of these amounts is extremely low. As to pressure of work, the introduction in 1982 of the double-shift system considerably increased the workload on primary teachers, and thus the stresses and strains.

Since 1964, teachers' unions have called for the Education Ministry to approve a statute for the profession in a bid to improve their status and working conditions. These calls have so far gone unanswered. A paper produced by the two largest teachers' unions and sent to the Director of UNESCO, notes: "At present a career in teaching is regarded more as hard labour than a vocation: people join because they can't find a better job".[66] A senior Ministry official put the matter to me succinctly, saying that a career in teaching is considered "socially worthless".

The paper mentioned above lists some of the consequences of the low status felt by teachers: a number of teachers leaving for more attractive jobs; the refusal of many recently-trained teachers to take up the profession; students refusing to enter teacher training sections of higher education; the dissatisfaction of teachers in post, which is reflected by strikes; and a deterioration in the quality of teaching caused by the use of non-qualified teachers and the tendency of some teachers to take second jobs in order to make ends meet.[67] A striking statistic illustrating the antipathy to teaching on the part of potential teachers dates from 1993 (before the current civil war and socio-economic crisis began): of 350 students entering the University's Institute for Applied Pedagogy, where secondary school teachers are trained, only 27 had expressed a desire to study there. The Ministry had to direct the other 323 to attend![68]

---

[66] Note Presentee au Directeur General de l'UNESCO, Federico Mayor, lors de sa Visite au Burundi par les Syndicats d'Enseignants au Burundi, STEB et SLEB, no date, p2. This is consistent with what I was told by one teacher, who said a pupil told her that only those who could not find another job went into teaching!

[67] Ibid, p2-3

[68] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, July 1998; p45-6

Clearly there was, and still is, great resistance on the part of potential teachers to enter the profession. A UNICEF report describes the inevitable downward spiral created when there is a shortage of teachers: "To keep classes going, the central administration allows the recruitment of people with no teaching qualifications in the place of those who have graduated from teacher-training and who refuse to take up a teaching career".[69] Describing the training of primary teachers, another article notes that very often it is the oldest (i.e. those who have had to repeat years) and least gifted pupils who are sent to teacher training college. "It is difficult", says the article, "to look with optimism towards the future of this country when the 'élites' are willing to entrust their children's education to teachers who obtained the lowest exam results when they finished secondary school".[70]

My own discussions with teachers and Ministry officials were consistent with the above picture of a demoralised, badly supported and often untrained profession in a state of crisis. Given the crucial role teachers play in instructing those who will shape Burundi's future, there is an urgent need to address the issue. It should also be emphasised that teachers' salaries must be significantly increased for morale and motivation to improve.

[69] D. Bitagoye, Document de Reference sur l'Enseignement Primaire au Burundi, UNICEF, July 1999, p14
[70] D. Nsavyimana, Comment sortir le systeme d'enseignement actuel de l'impasse?, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997, p219.

Unequal access

The serious distortions in access to education lie at the heart of the problem of 'exclusion' in Burundi, and are one of the primary causes of the conflict. The geographical spread of educational services shows a stark imbalance: there is a clear distinction between those provinces that are well serviced and others that are not. Southern and central provinces are generally much better provided for than those in the North and East.

In broad terms, many statistics suggest that there are two divisions of educational service in Burundi. In the first division, comprising about a third of the population,[71] are Bujumbura City, Bururi, Makamba, Gitega, Muramvya and Mwaro. Access to education in these provinces is much better than elsewhere. In the second division are the provinces of Bubanza, Cankuzo, Cibitoke, Karuzi, Kayanza, Kirundo, Muyinga, Ngozi, Rutana and Ruyigi. Arguably, Bujumbura Rurale has entered this list as a result of recent population displacements and 'regroupements'; however, some areas of the province, such as Ijenda, do have vigorous and functioning schools.

In 1998-9, over half of all primary teachers (6,614 out of 12,156) worked in the first division,[72] despite the fact that these six provinces contained only one third of the population. The highest number of teachers in a single province was in Bururi which had 1,851. This contrasts with the combined total of 1,683 teachers in the four provinces of Cankuzo, Muyinga, Rutana and Ruyigi.[73] Although the war has severely affected these latter provinces, comparative statistics from 1992-3 show a similar pattern. The same divisions apply to the provision of classrooms. The first division of six provinces has 44% of all classrooms, leaving the other eleven provinces with 56%.[74]

This division is equally marked at the level of secondary education. Bururi with 36 and Gitega with 35 secondary schools have more than double the

[71] Resultats Provisoires: Recensement General de la Population et de l'Habitation, Interior Ministry, 1990. There has been no census since.
[72] Statistiques Scolaires, Annee Scolaire 1998-99, Ministry of Education, Departement de l'Enseignement Primaire, Feb 99, p28
[73] Ibid, p28
[74] Statistiques Scolaires, Annee Scolaire 1998-99, Ministry of Education, Departement de l'Enseignement Primaire, Feb 99, p28

number of schools to be found in the second division provinces.[75] This is despite the fact that one aim of the community colleges was to spread access to secondary education more evenly.[76] Seven provinces (Cibitoke, Kayanza, Kirundo, Muyinga, Ngozi, Rutana and Ruyigi) have no technical schools while Gitega has six. In 1998-9, the six provinces in the first division accounted for 60% of all secondary school pupils (39,800 out of 66,800).[77] Bururi alone had 12,500 pupils, followed by Bujumbura City with 8,700.[78] Together these two provinces represent only 11% of the national population, yet they account for 32% of all secondary pupils. In contrast, five provinces - Bubanza, Cankuzo, Karuzi, Kirundo and Muyinga - altogether account for only 7,000 secondary pupils.[79]

There are several reasons for these clear regional differences in access to education. The fact that all Presidents and many Education Ministers from 1965-93 came from the southern province of Bururi is a major reason favouring that province and the South in general. Over time the bureaucratic, business and personal links between Bururi and the capital have also been developed. The central region was provided early with schools - Gitega was the capital before Bujumbura - so there is a strong educational tradition there. People from the South claim that the explanation lies in the poor agricultural resources in Bururi in particular, which have forced people from this province to find other avenues of employment, all of which depend on education. For instance, in order to enter the army, candidates must have at least primary education. Army officers need secondary education, which is partly why so many officers come from Bururi where provision of secondary schools is so high.

There are of course other factors: school attendance in other provinces suffers at times of the year when there is lots of agricultural work to be done. One teacher recalled how in Ngozi one year about 50 pupils failed to come to school to sit the national exam: they were required to help harvest crops with their families. Fishing too leads some not to attend school, while in Cibitoke children are reported to be involved in panning for gold.[80] Be that as it may, the favouring of the South in terms of educational provision

---

[75] Principaux Resultat de l'Inventaire des Infrastructures Physiques, Hydrauliques et Sanitaires des Ecoles Publiques du Burundi Pierre Claver Sinzinkayo, Ministry of Education, July 1998, p22

[76] A fact noted by one official report which says: "As for secondary education, instead of correcting the imbalance, community colleges have rather made it worse, since they are more numerous in regions already well provided with schools where certain communes have 3-4 colleges, while others have none", (Analyse Globale du Systeme Educatif, Tome II, Government of Burundi, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, Dec'97, Executive Summary, pXI). Bururi has some communes with 3-4 colleges.

[77] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p28

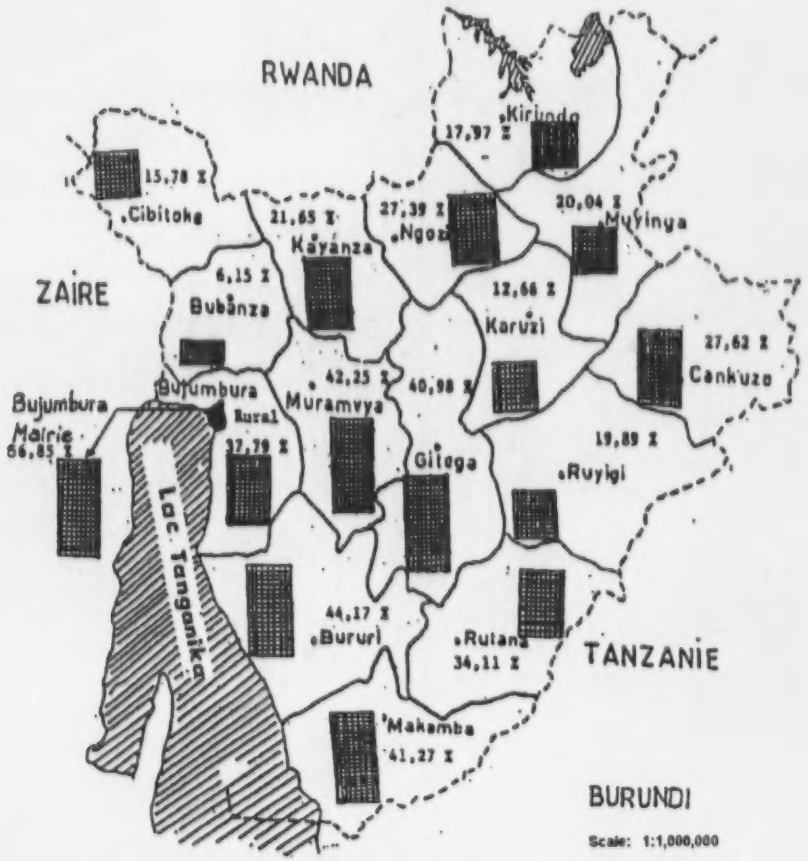
[78] Ibid, p28

[79] Ibid, p28

[80] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p26

has come to be a matter of profound grievance for Burundians from other regions.

NET PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY PROVINCE: 1996-7
(Vincent Ngendakumana, 1997)



Key:

>40 %
30 - 41 %
10 - 20 %
<10 %

Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, July 1998, p130
Please note that the new province, Mwaro, is not on this map.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Anecdotes and claims abound as to how certain areas and power groups have tried to maintain domination over the education process. The following examples were gathered during the course of this research. Some years ago some exam papers were marked "i" and "u" to show ethnic origin, apparently to alert examiners how to mark them. That practice has now been stopped. One analyst calculates that as much as 60% of donor funds for education were allocated to Bururi in the late '80s. In the early '90s, some pupils in Bujumbura, the children of army officers, gained prior access to exam papers. They knew the exam answers by heart but a scandal followed. Until 1992 authorities in Bururi simply refused to give statistics on education, presumably to avoid revealing the extent of its advantages.[81] Last year the Belgian Ministry of Development Cooperation asked for the number of community colleges in Bururi, in order to send the correct amount of teaching aids. They never received a reply, so nothing was sent. Telephone threats were made a couple of years ago after the publication of a newspaper article giving the numbers of secondary schools by province.

The connections in the political, administrative and commercial spheres that have contributed to the preferential treatment of certain provinces in terms of educational provision, also operate to the disadvantage of the majority ethnic group. A study published several years ago by FRODEBU showed the ethnic composition of all departments of government. The preponderance of the minority ethnic group reflects inter alia the inequality in the educational opportunities that are a necessary preparation for employment in the government service.

The historical and current inequalities in educational access are a key factor in maintaining the divisions which underlie Burundi's conflict. Addressing the disparities in access to education between different provinces and groups should not be done by re-apportioning existing resources, since reducing the access of those currently favoured is likely to exacerbate tensions. Redressing the imbalance has to be achieved by increasing the overall education capacity, which will require major investment by the international donor community.

Gender and education

There have always been far fewer girls than boys in schools in Burundi since the education system was established. In 1930, when education was organised by the Catholic Church, there were 14,700 boys in schools run by priests, but less than 700 girls in schools run by nuns.[82] The percentage of girls in education has improved over the years, helped by the double-shift system introduced in 1982, which meant that girls could attend school

[81] See Scolarisation des Elites et Renforcement de la Conscience Ethnique, in Les crises politiques au Burundi et au Rwanda (1993-1994), edited by Andre Guichaoua, Karthala, Paris, 1995, p132
[82] La Scolarisation de la Fille au Burundi, Theodora Nisabwe, Bujumbura, 27/2/99, p6

for half a day and do domestic work the other half (!).[83] Attendance rates for girls, however, are still well below those for boys: latest Ministry figures show that 44% of pupils in primary school are girls;[84] in secondary school girls comprise about 30%,[85] and at university only 25%.[86] On the other hand, in two sectors there are more girls than boys: 52% of students in community colleges[87] and 57% in the non-formal Yaga Mukama system are young women.[88] As suggested earlier, however, both these sectors give a second-best education, so the advantage for girls is less than may at first appear.

Various reasons are given for the low school attendance of girls compared to boys. One Ministry official noted the lack of role models for girls: only one government minister is a woman (predictably the Minister for Women) and few women are in other top civil service positions. "What responsibilities are given to a woman who has been able to study? Does one find women administrators, governors, project heads in the commune or province?" asks one report rhetorically.[89] Then there is "the indifference of the public to the value of education for girls".[90] Girls are expected to work in the house, and while both boys and girls are expected to work in the fields in rural areas, boys are given priority when it comes to schooling. Since girls cannot get jobs if they have only primary education, parents ask: why pay for them to sit six years in a classroom, when they could be at home working? Cost factors too may affect decisions: parents pay towards their children's schooling and those who cannot afford to pay for both may opt to send boys to school before girls.

In 1999 a Burundian branch of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) was officially inaugurated. Together with the Ministry of Education, FAWE plans to help increase girls' participation in the school system. A Ministry official put the matter to me as follows: given that women generally spend more time with their children than men (in Burundi as elsewhere) and are therefore more involved in their education, the better women are educated the better they can help their children, both girls and boys, and instil educational values in them.

Education for the Twa

---

[83] Ibid, p7
[84] Statistiques Scolaires, 1998-99, Ministry of Education, Feb99, p2
[85] La Scolarisation de la Fille au Burundi, Theodora Nisabwe, Bujumbura, 27/2/99, p13
[86] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p40
[87] Ibid, Supplement d'Informations: L'experience des Colleges Communaux, July 1999, p6
[88] Final Report: Seminaire-Atelier de Reflexion sur le Systeme Educatif Non-Formel Yaga-Mukama, July 1997, p28
[89] La Scolarisation de la Fille au Burundi, Theodora Nisabwe, Bujumbura, 27/2/99, p19
[90] Ibid, p18 on which the rest of this paragraph is based

The Twa are the third ethnic group in Burundi, estimated to account for 1% of the population. They are the poorest sector of the population. It is estimated that there are a few thousand Twa children of primary age, the vast majority of whom are not in school.[91] In 1998-9 UNESCO and the 'Association for the Promotion and Socio-economic Integration of the Twa of Burundi' helped 684 Twa pupils to attend school.[92] However, the Twa group as a whole is highly marginalised and their educational and other needs require special attention. One report calls them "the forgotten of the system".[93]

Education in refugee camps

It was not feasible to visit Burundian refugees in Tanzania for the purposes of this study but an informative report was received from a Burundian contact in the country, dated January 2000. He writes that there are a large number of primary schools in the camps for the 330,000 refugees who have arrived in Tanzania since 1993. Many teachers who have left Burundi organise and teach in these schools, which are now supported by UNHCR and a number of NGOs. Almost 90% of primary age children are reported to be in school, a number well above the percentage attending in Burundi. There are even a reasonable number of secondary schools in the refugee camps, all following the Burundian curriculum.

One problem of major concern to the refugees is that despite efforts by UNESCO and UNICEF, the Education Ministry in Burundi has been uncooperative in integrating children at school in the camps into the Burundian system. A recent report on the refugee camps in Kibondo District, for instance, explains that although the Ministry did send exam papers for 1999 to the camps, "...the completed exam papers were sent to Burundi for marking in July 1999, but nothing has been heard since" (by now January 2000).[94] While there may well be administrative reasons for this - for example, how does the Ministry supervise exams in another country? - an opportunity for reconciliation is being lost. A Ministry official in Bujumbura speculated that his Ministry may not wish to encourage education in Tanzania: "Why should we help train the rebels?" he asked. But lack of co-operation may well encourage the refugees, for whom education is of great importance, to feel even more resentful of the current Government and therefore more likely to oppose it.

---

[91] Project Proposal, UNESCO, Burundi, July 1999, p1. The actual number of Twa of school age is still to be confirmed, says the proposal.

[92] Ibid, p2

[93] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, July 1998, p98

[94] Barbara Harrell-Bond, Elly Asiku, Mauro de Lorenzo, Ellen Lammers, Julius Lutaakome Kayiira, DanChurchAid Evaluation of the Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) Refugee Project in Kibondo District, Tanzania, 5-19 January 2000: Report and Recommendations, Feb2000, p27, ftnt119

There is a strong case for proposing that education should be declared 'neutral ground' as far as Burundi's peace process is concerned. Because of the significance of education for the prospects of peace in the long-term, efforts should be made - at least at a technical and administrative level - to establish working contacts between education administrators in the refugee camps and the Education Ministry in Bujumbura. UNICEF is particularly well placed to encourage and assist such contacts.

As in Burundi itself, the number of girls attending school in the refugee camps is less than that of boys. One paper states that, "...the low attendance of girls in school was partly due to their high drop-out rate. In two Burundian refugee camps sampled (Mtabila and Muyovosi), girls comprised ... 45-47% in Grade 1 ... (but) only 32-34% in Grade 6. In other cases, Burundian refugee girls living in fragmented family situations, such as families with one parent or when they serve as the household head, never had an opportunity to attend school. And in general, as a humanitarian agency official noted, "(refugee) men and teachers say, why should girls go to school? They don't go to school in Burundi, so why should they go (in the camps)?"[95]

In addition to those refugees who left Burundi since 1993, there are reportedly 400,000 refugees from the pre-'93 era living in three camps and approximately sixty villages in Tanzania. For this refugee population there is only one secondary school, run according to the Tanzanian system, with 80 places available per year - although the numbers wanting entry are far higher.

[95] Marc Sommers, Emergency Education for Children, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 17/2/99, p16. Another report by Dr Sommers, A Child's Nightmare: Burundian Children at Risk, also published by the Women's Commission, in May 1998, has an interesting section on education in refugee camps: Fear and the Power of Education.

Government input

Four groups pay for education in Burundi: the Government, international donors, local communes and parents. The Government allocates about 21% of its budget to education.[96] This is an extremely high percentage of the budget, and appears to leave little room for expansion. In 1997, 40% of this money went to primary education, 31% to secondary, and 29% for higher education.[97] Given that the number of pupils in primary schools is about 10 times more than in secondary schools (and over 100 times more than in university), the proportion allocated to primary education is very low, and in part accounts for the problems described above. One Ministry report, noting that the percentage allocated to primary education had been consistently diminishing in the '90s, comments drily that this is "somewhat at odds with the aim of universal primary education".[98]

For primary education the Government money is used mainly to pay the salaries of teachers and Ministry officials: 95% goes on salaries,[99] leaving only a small amount for other needs. The many other costs relating to education, from construction and maintenance of buildings to school-books and materials, have to be met by donors, parents and local communes. The primary schools I visited all reported having a reasonable number of text-books and teaching aids (wall charts, etc.), generally provided by UNICEF in collaboration with UNESCO or via fees paid by parents.

The Government also provides for university education. Students receive grants to pay the maintenance costs and donors give technical assistance. Parents do not pay any fees to send their children to university. There is a certain irony here as a small number of university students (5,900) have their costs covered, while a large number (1.1 million) needing primary education, have to rely on their parents' ability to pay for them, as described below. The new University of Ngozi, which is a private institution, does charge student fees and living costs, which can either be covered by loans or paid directly by families.

Parental input

[96] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Bujumbura, April 1999, p82, figures for the 1999 budget. This is about $40 million.
[97] Bilan de l'Education pour Tous, Rapport Preliminaire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Burundi, August 1999, p25. The percentage going to primary education slipped to 37% in 1998 (p48).
[98] Ibid, p48. Page 27 says that the tendency over the last ten years has been to give a growing proportion of resources to higher education, to the detriment of primary schooling.
[99] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, July 1998; p29

Parents have to spend a significant part of their income to send their children to primary school. In addition to school fees, they must pay for uniforms, exercise books and stationery. The total cost has been estimated at over 8,000 Burundian francs per child per year,[100] although individual parents report that the figure is even higher. Given that almost 60% of families earn less than 33,000 francs per year (1997 estimates), and that the average family may have 5-6 children, the economic problem confronting parents is clear.[101] Even if only two children go to school, it would account for a large proportion of the family income - in many cases half the money earned in a year. Although there is state provision to pay school fees for destitute children, this still leaves the majority of parents faced with huge bills if they wish to send their children to primary school.

For secondary school the costs borne by parents are much higher. School fees alone vary from 6,000 francs per year in community colleges to 15,000 in other secondary schools. Parents also have to provide uniforms, exercise books, stationery and back-up materials. For students in boarding schools the cost is much greater, estimated at 80,000 francs for lycées and 150,000 francs for technical schools.[102]

The cost to parents of both primary and secondary education effectively rules out many children from attending school. A 1999 Ministry report states simply: "In fact, the average per capita income does not allow the great majority of Burundians to pay the cost of educating their children".[103] Despite this finding, the policy of the Ministry is to encourage local communities and parents to cover even more of the costs of education. Primary school fees went up from 300 to 1,000 francs in 1999, and secondary fees were raised too. The Ministry wants parents to become more involved financially and in other ways with their schools; a recent paper encourages "parents and local groups to contribute more to financing education, and to building and managing school infrastructure".[104] This sentiment is repeated elsewhere in official papers, but the question is how much more can parents contribute in cash and in kind than they do already.

International donors have played a major role in financing the education sector in Burundi in the past. However, after the coup in 1996 there was a

---

[100] Ibid, p30

[101] Ibid , p30 and 132; figures are for years 2-6. The first year is cheaper, about 5,000 francs. In 1999, after these figures were calculated, the annual fee for primary school was raised from 300 to 1,000 francs a year.

[102] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p32

[103] Ibid, p33

[104] Bilan de l'Education pour Tous a l'An 2000, Rapport Preliminaire, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Burundi, August 1999, p84. In a speech made on 26/1/98 the then Prime Minister warned that given the aim of universal primary education in 2010 and the expansion of secondary and higher education, "...the beneficiaries and local groups will have to undertake progressively to cover an important part of the costs of education".

drastic decrease in donor funding for secondary and university education. International aid for education in Burundi was reduced by over 70% between 1990 and 1997.[105] The role of donors will be discussed later.

Cost-effectiveness

A major Ministry review of its programme, published in 1999, asks if the investments made in education have resulted in solid achievements. It is clear, says the report, that regarding the resources invested the "Burundian education system is very uneconomic as it produces too many failures".[106] The report (using somewhat different statistics from those given earlier) lists these failures as follows:

- " Even with the large-scale opening of community colleges, only 20% of those finishing primary enter secondary school.
- A pupil entering the first year of primary school has one chance in a hundred of getting to university.
- Levels of retaking years are very high: 22% in primary school, 15% in secondary, and about 35% in the University of Burundi.
- External evaluations reveal that the Burundian education system gives weak results. Average marks in the national tests after year 10 ... vary between 30 and 40%".[107]

A reduction in the numbers of students who have to repeat school years, would increase cost- effectiveness significantly. It would also increase the capacity of the education system to absorb larger numbers of pupils. However, this should not be done simply by lowering the standards required to pass. It has to be achieved by addressing the quality of education in Burundi; particularly through teacher training and a revision of the curriculum.

[105] Ibid, p27
[106] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p83
[107] Ibid, p83.

International donors

In the past donors played a major role in funding Burundi's education system but the decision to suspend aid in 1996 has had a serious impact on the education sector. As noted above, over the past decade the level of aid has been reduced by more than 70%. The main donors now are UN bodies such as UNICEF, UNHCR and UNESCO. The UN system has concentrated on infrastructure for primary education, and has built or rehabilitated 150 schools since 1997. Some technical assistance for the Ministry, such as computers to help the collection of statistics, has also been provided. The Belgian Government has continued to finance the construction of community colleges (76 were built from 1993-9) and to provide some educational materials for them, as well as building a number of primary schools. NGOs also provide some modest support to selected schools or provinces.

Primary schools appear to have sufficient teaching materials and textbooks, many donated by UNICEF. However, books for secondary schools, which used to be provided by donors, have not been donated since 1996, which leaves a very serious shortage at the same time as demand is increasing with the opening of more community colleges. As noted earlier, there is on average just one book for every four students in these colleges. I saw one library for a community college with just a few hundred books for all subjects. It is unclear why UNESCO has not played a more prominent role in providing books.

Former major donors, such as the European Union, are preparing to invest again in education but final decisions will depend on secure access to rural areas for work to be carried out. The EU plans to pay for rehabilitating and equipping primary schools and for in-service training for teachers. The French Government announced in late 1999 a five million franc contribution for improving education in French.

Infrastructure

The state of school buildings in Burundi also gives cause for concern. Many of the 1,467 primary schools are old and in a state of disrepair. Schools in some provinces were completely destroyed during the 1993 crisis, and many others have been damaged after use as temporary housing for families displaced by the conflict. There are also a number of temporary schools built by the UN, with bamboo siding and plastic roofing. In July 1998, according to unpublished UNICEF statistics, 92 primary schools were not functioning, 279 had no access to running water, and almost 15% of existing latrines were either blocked or full.[108] With an average of 59 pupils per latrine, this is a serious problem.[109] Many secondary schools, especially community colleges, are newer constructions and therefore in much better shape. However, about 40% of community college classrooms are in borrowed structures as the colleges' own buildings are not yet ready.[110]

Given the aim of increasing access to primary education, there is a pressing need to increase the number of classrooms available. The Education Ministry projects that there will be over one million children in primary school in 2003, a 50% increase on 1999 figures.[111] This means that another 4,000 classrooms will be needed.[112] In turn, as more children attend primary school, there will be pressure to increase the number of places in secondary schools, leading to the need for more classrooms in this sector too.

[108] Ibid, p17
[109] Ibid, p17
[110] Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais; July 1998, p149
[111] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p16
[112] Ibid, p17

Ministry policies to improve education

Ministry education guidelines are contained in a number of documents.[113] The most recent policy paper, approved by the Council of Ministers in 1999, calls for a major decentralisation of what it admits is a "heavily centralised system (since) organisational and decision-taking powers are granted to the different offices in the Ministry's central administration".[114] The changes proposed come from a recognition that the schools network is now so extensive that it can no longer be managed from the centre. One aim is to allow much greater participation in education management by parents and local groups, including in financial decisions. These changes are now being put into practice.

Ministry efforts to improve education have been hampered, as already noted, by pressure to increase numbers in school, rather than to improve the quality of education. In addition, there has been no evaluation by the Ministry of any of the major reforms undertaken. As a Ministry report says: "There is not one example of a systematic evaluation of the curriculum ... It is therefore difficult to have precise reference points to appraise it objectively. For example, the introduction of Kirundisation in 1973, which affected the structures of the education system as well as the content of the curriculum, has never been subjected to a comprehensive and systematic evaluation".[115] Likewise, the impact of the double shift system was never monitored: the side-effect it had of making ruralisation virtually impossible to implement went unchallenged. One policy was simply negated by another.

In the past, the ad hoc nature of educational decision-taking and the lack of clear educational goals has hampered Ministry efforts to develop a coherent and considered policy. There are signs that under the Internal Partnership, with FRODEBU holding the education portfolio, there is a new attitude to educational planning and this should be strongly encouraged by all interested parties. The Ministry is planning a major seminar on education, 'Colloque 2000', later this year; this will provide an important opportunity to take stock of the present situation and look at some of the critical issues on which action is needed.

---

[113] Primary and secondary school rules and regulations, for example, are to be found in Recueil des lois et reglements scolaires de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire, Ministere de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, Oct 91

[114] Politique Sectorielle, Cabinet du Ministre, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Bujumbura, Mar 99, p34

[115] Etude Prospective: Bilan de l'Education en Afrique; Cas du Burundi, Rapport Provisoire, Ministry of Education, Bujumbura April 1999, p53

Conclusions and recommendations

The Burundian education system is in crisis, from both a quality and a quantity perspective. The above analysis is based on information in reports by the Ministry of Education as well as independent reports by Burundian educationalists. It is corroborated by the views and concerns expressed by teachers, school directors and education officials in the course of this research. Many of the findings are generally accepted. The following points sum up the state of education in Burundi today:

- There are some excellent schools in Burundi and many dedicated teachers and Ministry officials. Nevertheless, their efforts reach only a small proportion of the country's children and youth.
- A majority of children receive no formal primary education, and the vast majority receive no secondary education.
- Boys have much greater access to education than girls at all levels.
- There is a significant learning problem for children in the last two years of primary school and the first year of secondary due to the change-over in the language of teaching.
- Major policy changes in the education system have not been effectively evaluated.
- Ministry efforts continue to concentrate on quantity (numbers in schools, class-rooms built, etc.) rather than on the quality of teaching.
- There is a severe lack of trained teachers, and teachers in post feel unsupported and demoralised.
- There is a serious shortage of text-books and teaching materials, especially in community colleges.
- The limited resources and inadequate facilities for technical education and training are depriving the country and economy of much-needed skills.
- There is a marked imbalance in the geographical distribution of schools throughout the country: about one third of the population enjoys two-thirds of educational services.
- Only one pupil out of a hundred starting primary school will reach university. There have been regional and ethnic distortions in access to different university faculties.
- In the next few years there will be a huge increase in the numbers of children needing access to education due to population growth and increased demand. This will put even more pressure on the system to provide more teachers, class-rooms and books.

- The quality of education will deteriorate further without significant new resources. The Government and parents already invest heavily in education, so the necessary funds to start improving the education system are unlikely to be found within Burundi.

Recommendations

There are no easy answers to the immense problems confronting the Burundian education system. Among Ministry officials and education specialists there is broad agreement on the main areas to be improved; however, even if the war ends, the scale of the improvements required means that with the limited resources currently available progress will be very slow. As noted above, delays in addressing the distortions and deficiencies of the education system will imperil any prospect of a durable peace. Therefore education must be a priority for donor funding. This should be directed both towards increasing the availability of education, and towards improving its quality.

Immediate areas for action, where donor support will be needed, include:

- Increasing education provision (primary and secondary) in all parts of the country that are currently most deprived.
- Up-grading teachers currently working in the system through in-service training, and improving the status of the teaching profession.
- Evaluation by the Ministry of the consequences of earlier changes in education policy: e.g. Kirundisation, ruralisation, the double-shift system, community colleges.
- Reviewing the curriculum for primary education.
- Reviewing the language policy in primary schools.
- Reviewing the priority to be given to technical education.
- Special attention to integrating the Twa into the education system.
- Planning how to get more girls and young women into formal education.
- Cooperation between the Education Ministry and refugee camp schools.

The urgent need in terms of Burundi's peace process is to expand the educational capacity so that resources can be more evenly distributed between all groups. This issue is significant both in terms of educational opportunities, and the deeper divisions that underlie Burundi's conflict.

Education is a priority not just for the children concerned but for the peace process and the future of the country itself. The current crisis in education demands serious and immediate action: it must be recognised, by Burundian policy-makers and international donors alike, as a peace imperative.

Acknowledgements

In researching and writing this report, I have greatly benefited by help of various kinds from many people. My discussions in Burundi were in confidence so I will not thank the officials, teachers and others there by name: I am very grateful to you all. Valuable comments to earlier drafts were received from Jenny Brown and Ingemar Gustaffson. My colleague, Bill Yates, whose original idea this was, added the peace perspective and helped shaped the argument. Four other Alert colleagues played key roles: editing and inspiration came from Ivan Campbell; Louise Franklin oversaw the formatting and presentation; Jon Burke worked on the maps; and Antonia Thomas undertook the distribution. Ideas, documentation and/or contacts came from a number of people, among them Linet Arthur, Su Braden, Birgit Brock-Utne, Jeff Crisp, Nick Hartley, Ben Parker, Claude Ribaux, Sharon Russell, Marc Sommers, Markus Weilenmann and Lennart Wohlgemuth. The late Robert Dodd kindly spoke to me about the importance of Kirundi just a few days before his sad and untimely death. My thanks to all named here: the improvements are theirs; deficiencies and responsibility are mine.

Selected bibliography

Analyse Critique du Systeme Educatif Burundais, study commissioned by the Great Lakes Advocacy Network, July 1998

Bazikamwe, Oscar, *La Planification de l'Education, Table Ronde sur le Systeme Educatif Burundais*, December 1998

Brock-Utne, Birgit, *"Education for All: in whose language?"* Paper given at the Oxford International Conference on Education, 10th September 1999

Brock-Utne, Birgit: *Whose Education for All? The Recolonization of the African Mind*, Falmer Press, New York/London, 2000

Bitagoye, Daniel, *Document de Reference sur l'Enseignement Primaire au Burundi*, UNICEF, July 1999

Bitagoye, Daniel, *Historique et Finalites du Systeme Educatif Burundais*, paper delivered at the Round Table on the Education System, Bujumbura, January 1998

Christian Aid, *Conflict in the Great Lakes: towards peace through education*, London, 1999

Government of Uganda, *Organisation of African Unity: The Empowerment of Women through Functional Literacy and the Education of the Girl-child*, UNICEF ESARO, 1997

La Lettre du Burundi: various articles on education in its Jan 2000 number

Ministere de l'Education Nationale, *Bilan de l'Education pour Tous a l'An 2000, Rapport Preliminaire*, August 1999

Ministere de l'Education Nationale, *Politique Sectorielle*, March 1999

Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Departement de l'Enseignement Primaire, *Statistiques Scolaires, Annee Scolaire 1998-99*, February 1999

Ministere de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, *Recueil des lois et reglements scolaires de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire*, Bujumbura, October 1991

Ministere de l'Enseignement Secondaire, *Superieur et de la Recherche Scientifique, Situation des Colleges Communaux*, May 1998

Ministere de l'Interieur, *Resultats Provisoires: Recensement Generale de la Population et de l'Habitation, Gitega*, November 1990

Niyongabo, Professeur Jacques, *Evaluation des Centres d'Education de Base, Yaga Mukama*", UNICEF, 1996

Nsavyimana D, *"Comment sortir le systeme d'enseignement actuel de l'impasse?"*, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997

Ntahombaye, Philippe: *"Les Langues Nationales et la Construction de l'Etat: l'example du Burundi"*, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997

Ntambona, Adrien: *"Eduquer Autrement Aujourd'hui au Burundi"*, Au Coeur de l'Afrique, 2-3, 1997

Ntambona A, *"L'education aux Valeurs a l'Ecole au Burundi"*, Au Coeur de l'Afrique,1/1999

OXFAM/ActionAid Policy Paper, *Education for All: A Compact for Africa*, November 1999

Rapport Final: Seminaire-Atelier de Reflexion sur le Systeme Educatif Non-Formel Yaka-Mukama, July 1997

Sinzinkayo, Pierre Claver*: Principaux Resultats de l'Inventaire des Infrastructures Physiques, Hydrauliques et Sanitaires des Ecoles Publiques du Burundi, Ministere de l'Education*, July 1998

Sommers Marc, *A Child's Nightmare: Burundian Children at Risk, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children*, May 1998

Sommers Marc, *Emergency Education for Children, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children*, 17th February 1999

UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, Government of Burundi*: Burundi: Analyse Globale du Systeme Educatif,* Tome II, December 1997

UNICEF, *Le phenomeme des traumatismes vecus par les enfants lors de la crise d'Octobre 1993*, Bujumbura, January 1995.